WAR FOOD ADMINISTRATION
Office of Distribution
Marketing Reports Division
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FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE

HIGHLIGHTS FROM MARKET NEWS REVIEWS
Week ending June 16, 1944

WEATHER:

Showers: Not exactly April showers, but there have been scattered showers all over the Western Region area with the Northwest receiving the heaviest concentration. The higher altitudes in the mountain states and of Oregon, Washington, and the northern part of California received most of the light rainfall this past week. This was in contrast to the dry winds of the week previous.

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

Potatoes: This week witnessed a substantial drop in the fob price of U. S. #1 white potatoes from the Wasco-Shafter district in Kern County, California. Prices at the beginning of the week were mostly $2.10 to $2.35 per cwt. and closed the week at mostly $2.10 to $2.15. No. 2s were mostly 95 cents compared with no demand for that stock the previous week. With the exception of the two days when shipments were curtailed by I.C.C. requirements, they have been running above 700 cars daily although the daily average this week has been but 462 cars. Total shipments this season to date amount to 15345 cars compared with 14552 last season for the same period. Late estimates indicate that the Kern County potato deal may be fairly well completed by the 15th of July.

Onions: The condition of the wholesale market indicates that the housewife is not yet aware of the large quantities of better quality onions now available. Handlers are generally complaining that onion sales are not at ceiling. That was true when there were fewer onions, when they were not of such good quality, and there was some difficulty in getting the "un-onion-conscious" cook again "onion-conscious". Hence, whether the price remains at ceiling is not the problem, but one of saving food. Last week we reported a Western Region spring onion yield of 883,000 sacks and an early summer yield of 875,000 sacks. In 1943 the yields were 270,000 sacks and 392,000 sacks respectively, while the 1932-41 averages were 234,000 sacks and 522,000 sacks. Some of this additional yield is, of course, contracted to the dehydrators, but it now appears not all of it will find a ready market without careful attention to distribution and consumption.

Lettuce: Reports from the Northwest and Rocky Mountain states indicate the lettuce crop in those states will be somewhat later than normal and yields may be lighter. Lettuce in the Salinas-Watsonville, California, area has dropped off in amounts being shipped and is likely to continue light through the balance of June. Just over 800 cars have been shipped out of that area during the last ten days compared with over 1000 cars for the previous ten day period. Fob price on crates of 5 dozen heads closed the week at $3.00 -- another increase. The previous week closed at an average of $2.50 per crate.

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Cherries - To date, California, Oregon and Washington have shipped interstate 698 cars of cherries this season. Last year for the same period these states moved only 510 cars interstate by rail. The season in Oregon and Washington just started this week, whereas California is over the peak. Wholesale prices on Bings, in Oregon, are quoted at 27 to 30 cents per pound while in California they are quoted at 15 to 18 cents per pound. The crop is considered to be below normal in all three states but above the 1943 crop.

Cantaloups: The cantaloup season in the Pacific Northwest is reported as being some later than normal and with the growing conditions below normal, the increased acreage they may not produce much more than the 1943 crop. The Imperial County, California, crop is now moving at the rate of over 100 cars daily. On June 16 the number was 129 cars. On June 16 last year the shipments from Imperial County amounted to only 82 cars and the peak of the season had been passed. Fob prices at the close of this week are $5.00 per crate of 27 or 45 standards. Last year at this time the price was $5.50.

GRAIN PRODUCTS

Wheat: State and national goals for 1945 wheat acreage has been announced by WFA. The national goal totals 69,241,000 acres. The goal for the Western Region states of 9,824,000 acres is less than the prospective acreage of 10,377,000 acres indicated for 1944. Washington has a goal of approximately 2,400,000 acres, highest in the region. Harvesting of the winter wheat is now well under way and prospects for a good crop appears favorable. Rust damage in the winter wheat and also the spring wheat does not appear as to be as heavy as first reports indicated during the last of May and the first week of June.

The Canadian Wheat Board has lowered its selling price on wheat and has offered it to the United States and Neutrals as of June 13th at 6 cents per bushel less than the June 7 to 9 price or $1.42 per bushel for No.1 northern in store at Fort William and Port Arthur.

Barley: Argentine barley shipments are expected soon to supplement the present light supplies in the United States. U.S. stocks of barley on farms and in commercial channels are reported as 1,623,048 tons, as of June first, which is the smallest since 1940.

Hay: Crop conditions as of June first indicate a total hay crop for 1944 of approximately 87 million tons for tame hay and 12 million tons for wild hay or a total of 99 million tons which is better than 10 percent above the 10 year average.

DAIRY AND POULTRY

Poultry: Dressed poultry holdings in cold storage, as of June first, total 122,733,000 pounds. This is reported as being almost six times greater than the holdings for last year and about 85 percent larger than the last five year average. The two highest holdings are fowl at 30,329,000 pounds and turkeys at 36,103,000 pounds. Pacific Coast holdings of turkeys are about 23 percent greater for June first this year than last and about three times greater than the last five year average.

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Butter: Production of this commodity in the Western Region states during the first week of June was 1 percent less than that of the last week of May and 6 percent less than the previous week. For the U.S. production increased 1 percent during the first week of June but was still 8 percent lower than the previous week. "Set-aside" for July will be 45 percent, and for August, 30 percent. The markets have maintained a firm position and supplies have managed to keep abreast of demand except in some few markets, especially San Francisco, where demand has been pressing supplies.

Eggs: Since January first the War Food Administration has purchased slightly over 18 million cases of eggs to support the producer market. Wholesale prices in the Western Region markets were slightly improved during the last week. In Los Angeles the prices advanced as much as 1 to 2 cents on large to medium sizes.

LIVESTOCK AND MEATS

Wools: Market News reports that wool buyers are sizing up the market daily, for wools suitable for contract items for the armed forces. This is in connection with territory wools; also that Montana and adjoining territory wools of the better classes are selling at $1.21, clean basis, for graded Big French combing and staple, 64s and finer.

Hogs: Although floods and weather conditions interfered some with the movement of hogs into some of the principal markets, the number received at the twelve principal markets during the past week totaled 491,000 head compared with 492,925 for the week previous and 394,513 head for the same period last year.

Marketing in the middlewest was generally heavy and demand slow to sluggish. On the western markets receipts were heavy although mostly not up to the week previous. In face of this condition prices were slightly strenghtened. Support classes brought support prices.

Cattle: On the western markets there was little changeover last week in the market on cattle. Last week was characterized by a slow market while this week it was uneven. There appeared to be a fairly liberal supply of beef animals meeting the current demand. Choice fed steers brought slightly increased returns of up to 25 cents over last week some few other stock was from 50 cents to $1.00 lower.

COTTON AND FIBER

Cotton: The Cotton and Fiber Branch office in San Francisco will soon move and establish headquarters in Bakersfield, Kern County, California.

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